

**OCTOBER 2010**

## **MEDIA FACTSHEET**

### **Infocomm@SME Programme**

The Infocomm@SME programme was launched in June 2007, to accelerate the adoption and innovative use of infocomm by SMEs, so that these enterprises can leverage infocomm to improve productivity, sharpen their competitiveness and expand their market reach.

The Infocomm@SME Programme focuses on:

- a) Educating SMEs on the value and possibilities of infocomm;
- b) Providing SMEs with hassle-free and trusted access to infocomm; and
- c) Making infocomm affordable to SMEs

Drawing from the past few years of implementation experience and feedback from SMEs, the Infocomm@SME Programme has been expanded to further drive and scale up the level of infocomm adoption among SMEs through:

- a) Promoting the use of “quick-to-implement” infocomm solutions by the SMEs to improve their basic business functions. For example, accounting, human resource & payroll, customer relationship management and enterprise resource planning ICT solutions;
- b) Transforming the SMEs through sector wide ICT adoption to achieve greater economies of scale and to improve the capability of the sector; and
- c) Helping SMEs leverage “Plug & Play” and easy to use infocomm technologies, such as the mobile and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) applications.

The key initiatives and resources under the enhanced Infocomm@SME Programme are:

**i) SME Infocomm Resource Centres (SIRCs)**

The first SIRC was set up at the Singapore Polytechnic in June 2007, followed by a second centre at the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry in August 2008. The SIRCs serve as one-stop centres for SMEs to learn more about infocomm technologies. Besides advisory and consultancy services, SMEs are encouraged to tap on the available resources and seek professional expertise to trial or pilot innovative solutions. The SIRCs also organise regular workshops and technology learning sessions for SMEs to gain knowledge on common infocomm business applications, such

as IP telephony, security software and receive updates on the latest technology trends. As at end September 2010, the SIRC's have successfully reached out to over 7,000 SME participants through the various training engagements and business clinics efforts.

ii) **iSPRINT – SME Productivity with Infocomm Adoption and Transformation**

The S\$25 million initiative was launched by IDA in March 2010, in collaboration with SPRING Singapore and the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS). It aims to address the different infocomm adoption needs of the SMEs and making it easy for the enterprises to seek assistance for their computerisation projects.

IDA is the one-stop contact point for SMEs to seek advice and financial incentives for their infocomm adoption projects. iSPRINT supports a suite of infocomm solutions, from simple solutions that improve business operations to innovative use of technology that will transform the business or sector. It will also support subscriptions to SaaS applications so that SMEs can easily get started with minimum infrastructure investments.

As at end September 2010, more than 200 SMEs have benefitted from iSPRINT to defray part of the project costs when they adopt infocomm for their businesses. These SMEs have also collectively invested \$2 million on their own in ICT enabled business improvement and transformation projects.

To further ease the grant application process for SMEs when they adopt simple and quick-to-implement solutions, the “iSPRINT Packaged Solutions” was introduced. IDA evaluates and pre-qualifies packaged solutions submitted by ICT Solution Providers. With these packaged solutions, SMEs do not need to submit any business proposal or grant application form to obtain the financial incentive. They can proceed with the purchase of the solution, implement it and make the claim through IDA upon successful execution. This will also help to shorten the grant application process by about six weeks.

The latest list of “iSPRINT Packaged Solutions” for Accounting, Payroll and Point-of-Sales is available at: [www.ida.gov.sg/sme/ITPackages](http://www.ida.gov.sg/sme/ITPackages).

By end of 2010, SMEs can also expect SaaS packaged solutions to be added onto the “iSPRINT Package Solutions” list.

### iii) **Sector Wide Infocomm Adoption**

Given that over 80%<sup>1</sup> of our SMEs<sup>2</sup> have less than ten employees, it is beneficial for SMEs to approach infocomm adoption from a sectoral approach that will help aggregate their demand and allow them to embark on computerisation together with better economies of scale. The collective implementation of infocomm solution(s) can help to level up the capability and efficiency of the sector.

IDA will work with the other government agencies and organisations such as trade and industry associations to facilitate the transformation of a sector through harnessing infocomm technology.

Some examples of sector wide infocomm adoption projects include collaboration with:

- a) Stevedore Association to improve the stevedoring industry's productivity through the development of a shared services portal, known as "Stevedore Net". The system is currently under implementation and it aims to automate many day-to-day operations of the Stevedoring companies. The portal is expected to generate a 10% increase in productivity and up to a 12-hour reduction in the turnaround time for each vessel at the Jurong Port.
- b) The Association of Employment Agencies (Singapore), to automate their members' common business processes through the implementation of a shared services portal known as "Integra" which serves to improve productivity and reduce operational costs by doing away with manual forms and processes. For example, each agency can look at cutting down on up to 20 manual forms and saving two hours per sales transaction. Since July 2010, it has been made available to more than 700 employment agencies in Singapore.
- c) Ministry of Education on the pre-school sector to computerise the operations and support innovative learning at kindergartens through the organising of an ICT fair which generated more than \$900,000 in ICT expenditure by the kindergartens.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on Singapore Department of Statistics' and Economic Development Board's 2008 preliminary statistics for the services and manufacturing sectors (excludes construction sector as the 2008 statistics are not available).

<sup>2</sup> SMEs are defined as enterprises with net fixed assets investment less than \$15 million for those in the manufacturing sector. For the services sector, SMEs are defined as enterprises with employment size less than 200 workers.

iv) **SME Change Ambassadors**

IDA will partner with SMEs that have succeeded in using infocomm technology to transform their business and showcase them as role models to inspire other SMEs with their success stories. As role models for the other SMEs, their stories will be featured in marketing materials and they will be invited to different platforms to share their experience with the other SMEs.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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